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Jerome Hines
Chairman

A message from Mr. Hines and Mr. Buck:

Although there have been many frustrations and much hard work involved in putting Symphony Hall back on its feet, there has been a truly gratifying side to the project as well. There were moments early in our effort when the future of Symphony Hall hung in the balance, when it seemed that either the formidable task ahead or the lack of wherewithal to accomplish it could prevent the re-birth of a great institution from ever happening.

Fortunately, however, there has always been a large reservoir of human commitment to the Hall that has overridden many barriers and contributed to our success. From all over the state and from many people in leadership positions have come expressions of abiding interest and support. Their very tangible economic and personal assistance has enabled Newark Symphony Hall to make substantial progress.



Milton Buck
President

Our deepest thanks go to all those individuals and organizations that have helped our cause, and particularly to the City of Newark and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Without their crucial aid all our efforts would have been in vain.

There remains much to do. We are encouraged by the many significant steps that already have been taken, but we know that there will be many challenges ahead. We are confident that we can meet these challenges by pursuing a prudent yet vigorous course of action. In such a way, we are convinced, we will be successful in re-creating a great performing arts center worthy of the highest aspirations of the people it serves.

ADMINISTRATION



Symphony Hall is one of New Jersey's most valuable cultural assets. Its large capacity, the essential beauty of its interior spaces, and its location at

a transportation cross-road in the state's largest city make it irreplaceable as an institution serving the people of New Jersey.

Through its 53-year history, it has been the scene of the widest possible variety of musical, theatrical and other entertainment presentations. Arturo Toscanini, the Rolling Stones and Eddie Cantor are among the many musical stars who have performed on its stage, and the list of other musical, ethnic and theatrical entertainers now appearing at the Hall is similarly impressive.

When the Hall went dark in February of 1976 there was little hope it would re-open. The immediate reasons for the closing were technical: building code violations in the building were too costly for the then-existing Symphony Hall organization to overcome. The theater's difficulties were reflected in slackening audience interest and shrinking financial support; its physical appearance showed signs of decline as well. By 1976, the heavy burdens of maintenance, financing for necessary improvements, and mounting another season's program had grown beyond the capacity of the previous organization to handle.

The theater's re-birth was brought about in a remarkable cooperative effort by people who realized its great importance to the cultural life of the region. Newark's Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson appointed Milton Buck, the city's corporation counsel, to coordinate the city's response to Symphony Hall's closing. Independent of the city's effort, a volunteer organization, the "Save Symphony Hall Committee," was formed

under the chairmanship of Jerome Hines, the famed Metropolitan Opera basso and longtime friend of Symphony Hall. These two initiatives were to join forces in order to plan a reorganization, raise necessary funds, and open the doors of the hall once again.

Thus emerged the new Newark Symphony Hall Corporation, a private, non-profit institution with Mr. Hines as Chairman and Mr. Buck as President of the Board of Trustees. The Board itself is composed of representatives of the state's business community and government, of the city's residential community, and of the New Jersey State Opera, the New Jersey Ballet, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the Garden State Ballet, the Newark Community Center of the Arts, and the Newark Boys Chorus.

The success of this endeavor became apparent when generous contributions were secured from the Victoria Foundation, the Turrell Fund and Local 21 of the Essex County Theatrical Stage Employees to be used to remedy code violations. A grant of \$100,000 was obtained from the state through the State Council on the Arts in order to support operations. The State Department of Community Affairs approved



Trustees: left to right—Ray Male, Leo Killingsworth and Mamie Hale

the application of \$240,000 towards lighting and beautification of the building's exterior and immediate surroundings.

No less crucial to the Hall's resurgence was a pledge by the City of Newark, with the full support of Mayor Gibson and the Newark City Council, to provide for necessary major repairs and replacement.

As activities developed, it was perceived that the health of the entire Lincoln Park area would be an important factor in the Hall's revitalization. Involved from the outset in this concern were the Newark Community Center of the Arts, an arts education organization with strong ties to the Newark community, and the Newark Economic Development Corporation, an economic betterment agency composed of key city and business leaders.

All of these activities came to fruition on April 22, 1977, when the Corporation signed a new lease with the City of Newark for Symphony Hall. Only two days later the first event was held under the new administration, a choral and orchestral performance for the benefit of the Hampton Institute of Hampton, Va. A variety of first-rate events were scheduled for the new season, including gala performances by the New Jersey State Opera, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Garden State Ballet and popular music attractions.

Among our first orders of business was our participation in hearings held during the spring by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts concerning the feasibility and location of an official state performing arts center. The Council heard a particularly strong case made for Symphony Hall by Mr. Hines, Mayor Gibson and Newark Council woman Marie Villani, the Greater Newark Chamber of Commerce, the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee and the Essex County Theatrical Stage Employees Union. "Using Symphony Hall for expanded cultural



"The Mosque"—1951

activities," said Mayor Gibson, "would insure that performances will be held in a facility which gives a healthy sense of history, time, place and architectural beauty. It would be prohibitive in terms of cost to attempt to duplicate this facility and its aesthetic values." Although the Council made no determination of the performing arts question, it was evident in the testimony of these officials and other friends of the theater that Symphony Hall would be a leading candidate for such a role should a performing arts designation be given.

RENOVATION



Symphony Hall is among the most impressive performance halls and theaters in the nation. Built in 1925 as a Shriners Temple, it is designed along classical lines with the basic simplicity inherent in this style, and with numerous aesthetic details that add warmth and feeling to its interior. It is among the larger halls in its class, with a capacity of 3,365 seats, making it larger than Carnegie Hall. Its acoustics are generally regarded as excellent. Tests have shown that its reverberation characteristics are equal to Symphony Hall in Boston and other leading concert halls.

A thorough cleaning and repair program was initiated as a first step toward rehabilitation when the Corporation took over. Considerable restoration work had been done during the early nineteen-sixties, but much of the Hall's interior beauty had lost its luster during intervening years. Over 300 seats were found to have been damaged, and many more had lost their brass numeral plates. These seats were repaired, and new numbers

were placed on each. Walls were scrubbed and painted, rugs restored, brass polished and new rest room fixtures installed.

The Hall's enormous chandelier was lowered and meticulously cleaned for the first time in twenty-five years. The necessary electrical repairs were made to meet city code requirements. The Hall's heating boiler and central air-conditioning equipment were cleaned and repaired. A new emergency lighting system was installed. Perhaps the most extensive work was done backstage, where the theater's badly out-of-date dressing rooms were completely rebuilt.

For the exterior work, we were fortunate in obtaining a \$240,000 grant from the state's Department of Community Affairs. Initial projects included the pointing of loose mortar on brick walls and repair of the Hall's roof. Stucco areas were painted. Substantial improvements were made in the stage loading area fronting on Orchard Street behind the theater.

The most visible improvements are yet to come. These and other steps to be taken are all a part of a study of Symphony



The dismantling of the canopy was the first phase of the front facade restoration



Antique settees from lobby were restored and moved backstage to the stars dressing rooms



Workmen clean 3,000 pieces of crystal and replace 500 lights in the theatre's main chandelier

Hall's potential uses made over a four-month period by the architectural firm of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates. The study was financed by matching grants from the Mayor's Policy and Development Office, the Schumann Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. The report is far-reaching; it makes recommendations, cited elsewhere in this report, that relate to the block in which Symphony Hall is located and beyond. Recommended steps for improving the exterior, planned for 1978, include the removal of paint, restoration of the facade, revision of the marquee, provision of facade lighting, new sidewalk paving and other appropriate measures to improve the building's appearance.

Newark Symphony Hall Corporation and the team that wrote the potential-use report see the Hall's development in terms



The renovated dressing rooms have enhanced the Hall's reputation in the entertainment community

of expansion beyond the confines of the theater itself. We recognize that Symphony Hall's rehabilitation will be a catalyst to the upgrading of the Lincoln Park area. Already several significant steps have been taken. Within a two-block radius of Symphony Hall, four major housing developments for the elderly are in various stages of planning, financing or reconstruction. Public-funding grants to the city government will also be used to restore Lincoln Park. With these factors contributing towards neighborhood stabilization, a Symphony Hall capital development program can encourage further improvement. A steady, sizable flow of patrons, artists and students represents a demand for commercial facilities, services and housing. The challenge is to integrate effectively the revitalized facility into the emerging fabric of the district.

HIGHLIGHTS



A. Melba Moore in concert with George Benson—September 18.
B. Backstage, Rolling Stone Mick Jagger flanked by songstress Roberta Flack and Phyllis Hyman—June 5
C. Teddy Pendergrass in concert—November 26

D. First lady of the Philippines Inelda Marcos and N.J. State Opera President Harrison Weaver attend "Tales of Hoffman"—October 1
E. New Jersey State Lottery Commission makes Peter Lapiska an "instant" millionaire—October 18

F. Central High School Graduation—June 13
G. Alex Bradford in one of his last performances—November 20
H. "The Body Attitude" presented by Ebony Fashion Fair, an annual fund-raising event for the Boys' Clubs of Newark—September 30

I. United States Immigration Department naturalizes 1,400 new citizens—November 16
J. Paul Russel "rehearses" Newark Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson for a cameo appearance in the Garden State Ballet's "Nutcracker"—December 22

Plans for the future. A report by the New York architectural firm of Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates on the potential uses of Symphony Hall foresees Symphony Hall as the focal point in a performing arts complex. The report, undertaken over a four-month period in 1977, is based on the firm's analysis of the theater's physical characteristics, on the potential improvement of its surrounding area, on the needs of performing arts groups for a variety of new facilities and on potential audiences in the region.

Newark Symphony Hall Corporation has taken the report under advisement, and will use it as a broad "guideline" to future improvements. The report's immediate priorities include maintenance and repair projects inside and out, some of which have already been completed. Among projects also recommended for action are the

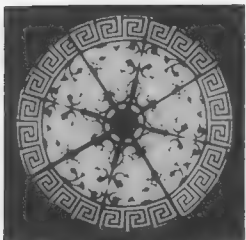
enlargement of the orchestra pit, installation of modular theatre lighting, and provision of certain noise control and acoustic devices.

As envisioned by the report, the entire block on which Newark Symphony Hall stands would contain complementary and arts operations, including smaller performance facilities, a conservatory with classrooms and a small outdoor amphitheatre. To implement this plan the report recommends acquisition of an adjoining building at 1016 Broad Street; acquisition and renovation of Orchard Street row houses adjacent to the stage-house for re-use as studios, classrooms, and offices; acquisition and re-use of East Kinney Street houses as classrooms and studios, construction of a new building at 1014 Broad St., and the creation of an outdoor amphitheatre on an interior courtyard.



Rendering of front facade restoration incorporating recommendations of
Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates study

PROGRAM



Symphony Hall's operations—primarily its programming policies and the way in which it carries them out—are less tangible than the restoration of the building but equally

as crucial to the Hall's success. In the light of the experience of former administrations, together with the economic realities of today's performing arts world, it was decided to make the Hall available on a rental basis to producers, shows and entertainers. Thus Newark Symphony Hall Corporation does not at this time book or produce its own attractions, as was the policy in the recent past. However, we retain control over our schedule of events in that each must conform to the theater's programming policies and conditions of use.

A primary consideration of the Corporation has been to increase the number of events. From April through December, forty-one events were held, in comparison to forty events held during an entire programming season the previous year. The increase is all the more impressive when it is realized that twenty of the previous season's total were daytime shows held for school groups, an area of programming that we plan to resume in 1978.

The kind of programming scheduled is just as important. Symphony Hall has, throughout its history, been the scene of a wide variety of events. Our objective is to maintain a balance compatible with our role as a major performing arts center. Programming is deliberately flexible, so that not only pop and classical music events are held, but school, community and church groups are presented as well. Some of the performing groups in our first half-season included the New Jersey State Opera, Maynard Ferguson and his Orchestra, the Garden State Ballet and singer Lou Rawls. The community's extensive use of the theater was reflected in



The theater: primed, cleaned and ready for opening night

programs by such organizations as Central High School, the Boys' Clubs of Newark and the Newark Jaycees. Major soccer matches drew large audiences for exclusive area showings on closed-circuit TV. For the State Opera's annual ball, all orchestra seats were removed and a dance floor erected. Another unusual event was the swearing in of 1,400 new citizens in ceremonies conducted November 16, 1977, by the United States Immigration Service.

The Hall is the performing home of the New Jersey State Opera and the Garden State Ballet. In addition, it is the rehearsal home for the New Jersey Symphony, which presents a concert series at the theater as well.

Security and parking in the area are matters to which we have given top priority. Although the safety of our audiences has never actually been in question, we recognize that the general public's perception of security in the area might be another thing. And so every attempt has been made to provide uniformed personnel at strategic points in and out of the Hall during each performance. The Newark Police Department is on the job directing traffic and helping

pedestrians outside; inside, the Bronze Shields, a fraternal order composed of members of the department, assist in handling the congestion typical at an evening of popular entertainment.

Inside the theater we recruited and trained our own doormen, ushering and concession crews from staff and students at the Newark Community Center of the Arts. Attired in formal dress, the house staff works hard to make each patron's Symphony Hall experience a pleasant one.

The parking situation has been improved by utilizing parking spaces on the former Potamkin car lot opposite the theater. When these and other spaces in the area are filled, a double-diagonal parking arrangement goes into effect under police supervision along Lincoln Park a half-



Concertgoer steps out of the Symphony Hall shuttle bus from Military Park Garage—November 4

DECEMBER 1977

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	⑫ Rehearsal			1 10am-2pm New Jersey Symphony Orchestra R 8pm-Midnight New Jersey Symphony Orchestra R	2 10am-2pm New Jersey Symphony Orchestra R 2pm-8pm Harlem Children's Theatre R	3 8:30am Soccer from Italy Closed Circuit TV 1pm Harlem Children's Theatre
4	5 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City" Set-Up 6pm-Midnight Opera R	6 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City"	7 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City"	8 10am-2pm New Jersey Symphony Orchestra R	9 10am-2pm New Jersey Symphony Orchestra R	10 9am-2pm Arnold LaCruise R
11 Garden State Ballet R	12 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City" Filming	13 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City"	14 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City"	15 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City"	16 Michael Levee Productions "Slow Dancing in the Big City" 5pm-Midnight Filming with live audience	17 Garden State Ballet R
18 Garden State Ballet R	19 Garden State Ballet R	20 Garden State Ballet 10am Open Rehearsal Special Performance for school children	21 Garden State Ballet 10am Open Rehearsal Special Performance for school children	22 Garden State Ballet 7:30pm Nutcracker (Premiere)	23 7:30pm-Midnight TP Productions R Slave/Jimmy Castor Blue Magic	24 1pm-4pm TP Productions R Slave/Jimmy Castor Blue Magic
25 7:30pm TP Productions Slave/Jimmy Castor Blue Magic	26 Garden State Ballet 7:30pm Nutcracker	27 Garden State Ballet 1pm Nutcracker	28 Garden State Ballet 1pm Nutcracker 7:30pm Nutcracker	29	30	31 Garden State Ballet 1pm Nutcracker

The December performance and rehearsal schedule in the main auditorium reflects the potential of Symphony Hall to serve as northern New Jersey's performing arts center



The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra in concert

block away.

Further parking was made available by the inauguration in November of a shuttle bus service from the Military Park garage directly to the Hall, with return trips available during and at the close of performances. This new service provides comfort and convenience in new vehicles leased from Transport of New Jersey, and promises to grow as more Newark Symphony Hall patrons and show sponsors become familiar with it.

An important aspect of Symphony Hall's operations is the income it derives from tenants in the building. The Hall is much more than a lobby and auditorium: there are four floors of office space, much of which is adaptable to a wide variety of uses. Current tenants are Television Channel 47; the Jewish Ledger newspaper group; the Theater of Universal Images, a community theater; Local 21 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, and the Garden State Ballet. Expanded occupancy of the office areas as well as the potential uses to which other buildings on the block might be put are essential



Symphony Hall usherette assists patrons

ingredients in our future plans.

The theater's Terrace Room is being used again on a regular basis for dances, benefits and various social functions. Here, too, a wide variety of organizations are participating, and a restoration program is planned for this area of the building.

We are appreciative of the many individuals and organizations who have supported our efforts and recognize that the progress that has been made would have been impossible without their help, particularly that of the City of Newark and the State Council on the Arts. We are secure in the knowledge that Symphony Hall is a focal point of a large population, and that the residents of the region need the kind of diverse programming we can offer. We are aiming to put the theater on a firm financial footing by conducting our operations in the soundest possible fiscal manner. By doing so, we will meet not only our responsibility to those who have supported us, but to our own vision of Symphony Hall as New Jersey's leading performing arts center.

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Newark Symphony Hall Corp. is supported by a grant from
The New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

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